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22 November 1983

NOTE FOR: Director, Program and Budget Staff  
FROM: Vice Chairman, Critical Intelligence Problems Committee  
SUBJECT: National Communications Security Policy

1. I have reviewed the draft NSDD proposed to replace PD-24 and offer the following comments.

2. I believe that this approach, i.e., treating only telecommunications protection, misses a great opportunity which will not be present again in the near future. It makes all sorts of sense to combine computer security and communications security into one document. The fact that the text of the earlier draft which did just that was unacceptable to many people should not have resulted in doing away with the combined concept. It would have been far preferable, in my view, to use the earlier draft as a basis for discussion and work at making the text acceptable, rather than splitting apart the two disciplines which are so intrinsically linked to one another in technical terms and getting more so every day.

3. In my mind, this current draft dealing only with COMSEC does two important things. It eliminates Commerce as a major player (this is good), and it reestablishes a policy-setting Board. I think it is extremely important that this Board be constituted at a sufficiently senior level to be able to actually set policy, which the current NCSC under Don Latham is clearly not able to do. If this Board is not senior enough, perhaps a SIG with representatives from State and Defense at the Deputy Secretary or even the Secretary level would be appropriate.

4. Finally, I would urge that an informal contact be established with the people at NSC, Defense, and NSA who are actually drafting this document. I think there is much that can be done at this level to influence the direction it takes and to clarify any misunderstandings that exist before they become major organizational policy differences. It may even not be too late to get computer security back into a single NSDD with COMSEC where it belongs. There is much sentiment at the White House and elsewhere around town to do just that, and it would be sensible to move in that direction.



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